

NOV 29 2001

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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SOUTHERN BAPT HISTORICAL SOC
901 COMMERCE ST STE 401
NASHVILLE TN 37203-3620

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

NOVEMBER 22, 2001

VOL. 125

No. 41

Miss. Baptist partnerships celebrated

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

If Mississippi Baptists ever want to assert their bragging rights, partnership missions might be the logical place to start.

The Partnership Missions Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) provides the opportunity for hundreds of people to participate in direct missions experiences in North America and around the world.

Mississippi Baptists' annual Partnership Missions Celebration was held at First Church, Jackson, November 8-9.

provided 24 volunteer teams, with approximately 200 participants.

"There is a great spiritual hunger in Ukraine," Thomas Nolen said. June Nolen said, "I was sharing with a neighbor lady, and three men nearby who were digging a ditch overheard our conversation. They came over to us and asked, 'Are you an American missionary?'" Through that simple contact, the Nolens were able to provide Bibles for these men.

Rafael Hernandez, director of missions/church planter strategist of the Southern New England Baptist Association, told the attendees about the work in Providence, R. I. "There is only one Southern Baptist church in Providence," he said, "a Hispanic congregation of about 25. This last year there have been two new congregations started."

He told of a working class church plant that had about fifteen young people attending. "Their parents saw what was happening to their children and became involved in the ministry," he said.

"Keep praying," said Hernandez. "Church planters need to know that they aren't alone, that there are people praying for them."

David Jackson, church start strategist with the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, stated that ten out of eleven associations in his areas had hosted Mississippi teams this past year.

He spoke of Operation Jumpstart, a revitalization program, which had renewed several congregations. "There were eight new churches planted in the last two years," Jackson said, "all of which launched with over 100 people in attendance."



NEW ENGLAND SUCCESSES — Rafael Hernandez, director of missions/church planter strategist in the Southern New England Baptist Association, speaks at the Partnership Missions Celebration of the work being done in Providence, R.I. (Photo by Tony Martin)

volunteers — this past year in medical, dental, and construction projects. "Volunteers have assisted in building two Sunday School rooms in existing churches, two free standing Sunday School rooms, and two new churches. We've seen over 5,000 professions of faith," said Wehmeier.

Mississippi Baptists are engaged in six mission partnerships: Ukraine, Honduras (2), Maryland/Delaware, Impact Northeast, and Boston. For more

information, contact Ken Rhodes, director, MBCB Partnership Missions Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3398 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 398. E-mail: krhodes@mbcb.org.

"We had a church in Fredrick that saw 70 people saved before its launch on October 7," Jackson stated.

The fieldside coordinators for Honduras, Eddie and Nora Wehmeier, told the attendees that they had worked with over 700

LifeWay opens largest store



LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention opened its largest store November 16 in Jackson with a dedication service and ribbon-cutting ceremony. On hand for the celebration were (from left) Linda Jackson, LifeWay regional director; Rocky Henriques, assistant store manager; Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson; Jerry Sager, store manager; Leroy Brewer, pastor of First Church, Fannin; and Grace Quarles, assistant store manager for human resources. The spacious new store is located in the same shopping center as before — Ridgewood Court, off County Line Road in north Jackson. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



ADVANCES IN HONDURAS — Eddie and Nora Wehmeier, Fieldside Coordinators in Honduras, share about the blessings of serving Mississippi Baptists and others this past year, seeing over 5,000 professions of faith. (Photo by Tony Martin)

The event combined a banquet Friday evening with panel discussions and conferences Saturday morning. Approximately 206 people attended the event, drawing participants from Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, and South Carolina, as well as from Mississippi.

Hands of Praise, the deaf choir from Woodland Hills Church, Jackson, provided the opening music for the banquet. Other music was provided by Mike and Allison Smitherman and Vicki Prather.

David Michel, MBCB associate executive director for missions extension shared during the missions impact segment of the program.

Thomas and June Nolen, fieldside coordinators for Ukraine, shared that in the last year they had experienced nine new church starts. Mississippi

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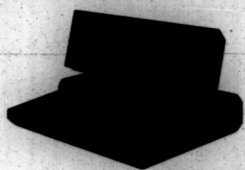
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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Postmaster: Send changes of address to The BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Send news, communication, and address changes to The Editor, BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530 (601) 968-3800 Fax: (601) 292-3330 E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

VOLUME 125 NUMBER 39

(ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$8.35 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date.

Could it be any clearer?

Operating under capitalism and free enterprise as we do in the United States, it is a fact of business life that companies must be constantly on the lookout for changes in the buying habits of their customer base. Such changes may be infinitesimally small or breathtakingly large, but if companies are to survive they'd better move in the direction of those changes as swiftly as possible.

American history is replete with tales of individuals and companies who misjudged the market, mismanaged the transition, or just missed altogether.

Ignore the signs of change in the business world, and you're history. It therefore comes as a great mystery how the television business of today could be missing all the cues that the world is rapidly changing all around them. While family-rated movies are setting all-time profit records this holiday season, television executives continue to flood the home-bound airwaves with nudity, sexual perversion, sewer language, and all manner of other unseemly conduct — all under the guise of "giving the American public what they want."

They couldn't be more mistaken. What the American public wants is entertainment like

Monsters, Inc., the current G-rated blockbuster movie whose \$63.5 million in receipts set an all-time Disney Company record for an opening weekend.

Then there's Shrek, the PG-rated summer hit from Dreamworks SKG that has raked in \$267 million and currently ranks as the number one movie of the year in box office receipts.

All four of the Star Wars movies released to date rank among the top 10 movies of all time in box office receipts, and all are rated PG. Very few R movies even make the top 20 all-time list, and there are no NC-17 (formerly X) entries.

To be sure, the movie industry still produces plenty of stinkers, but they seem to be getting the picture on the other end of the scale, too.

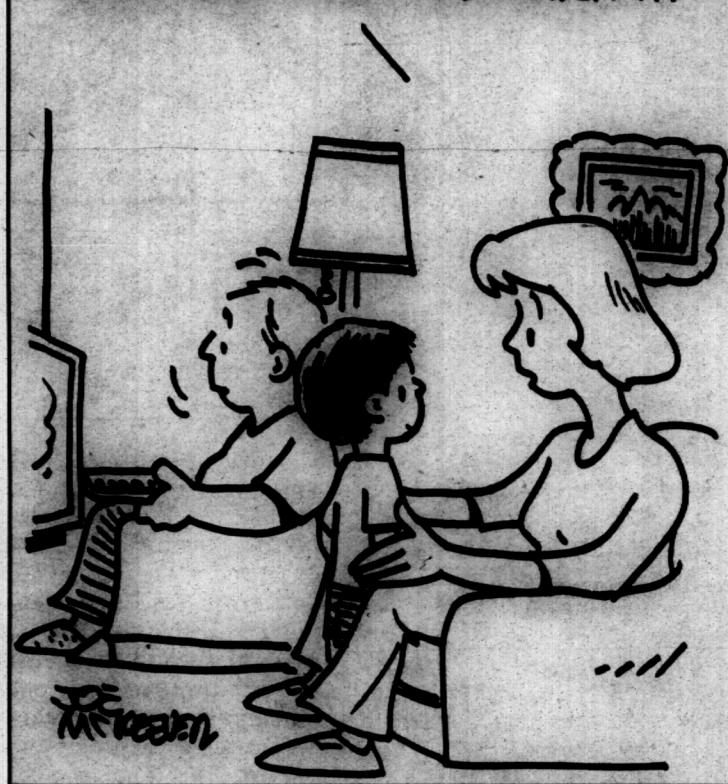
In light of the movie industry's rush toward family fare — and the enormous profits attached to those products — what has television given us? The recent Emmy Awards, presented each year to the "top" television shows by members of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, offer a glimpse into the mentality of the people in the television business.

While Shrek was setting records and families were eagerly awaiting the opportunity to make Monsters, Inc., an instant hit, The West Wing won four Emmy Awards including best drama. In one recent episode of The West Wing, fictional U.S. President Barton (played by Martin Sheen) openly curses God and calls him a "son of a —." Such blasphemy is becoming common fare on network television.

As moviegoers talked excitedly of the May 2002 release of the PG-rated fifth Star Wars movie, HBO's Sex and the City won an Emmy for best comedy series. Sex and the City has precious little comedy but does contain plenty of obscene language, full frontal nudity, and casual sexual escapades that simply can't be described here.

The West Wing and Sex and the City don't begin to encompass the total depravity of modern television. Yet television executives fret about their nosediving viewership and publicly scratch their heads in bewilderment over the annual hemorrhage of millions of their customers. They just don't get it.

"NO HONEY — HEAVEN WILL NOT BE ON TELEVISION. IF IT WAS, YOUR DADDY WOULD STAY HOME AND WATCH IT."



Could it be any clearer? Americans don't care for the senseless vulgarity in the adolescent scripts that pass for "top" television shows. If we ever did, we surely don't right now. The television business is changing, but many of the producers and executives and actors are apparently bent on hanging on to the old ways to the bitter end.

As Christians, let's do all we can to hasten that glorious day.

(Editor's note: The listing of television shows and movies in this editorial does not imply endorsement by the writer or The Baptist Record, and are used merely for comparative purposes.)

GUEST OPINION:



For entertainment, follow God's codes

By Phil Boatwright
Thousand Oaks, California

- Can you see through the propaganda of the media?
- Do you believe the Bible to truly be the Word of God?
- Do you study his Word? (Have you asked God to reveal himself through its chapters and verses?)

• Are you armed with the armor of God? (If not, you can't effectively witness or maintain a peace in your soul.)

Ecc. 3 states that there is a time to laugh and a time to dance. I take that to mean it's okay to be entertained.

Films can teach, entertain, and uplift the spirit. Indeed, they are modern-day parables. As to why we need codes, however, the Bible is clear about what we should put in our minds (Phil. 4:8).

God's Word doesn't apply to just parts of our lives, but to the sum total — including how we

entertain ourselves. If we govern what we support at the box office, it is honoring to God, nurturing to loved ones, and a guidepost to those who scrutinize our walk. Some key Scriptures are Ps. 101:3; Eph. 5:11; and 1 Thes. 5:21-22.

The best codes, of course, are those set by parents. "Train a child in the way he should go," Proverbs 22:6 states, "and when he is old he will not turn from it."

There can be nothing more difficult than raising a child to believe in spiritual things while living in a community that denies spiritual importance, but the task is not impossible.

Be aware. Set guidelines, and base those principles on your understanding of God's teaching. If your children understand biblical teachings, they will be able to cope with the contradictory messages and

images of lust, greed, selfishness, and violence with which television and movie theaters bombard them.

We also can take steps to counter Hollywood's disregard for codes, including:

- Show what you stand for and be careful what you support.

- Make your voice known. Might I suggest that when corresponding with members of the motion picture and television industries, you keep your letters precise, to the point and, most of all, short.

- Know the Word. If God's Word is in your heart and mind, you'll be able to intelligently debate Hollywood's perceptions.

- Be informed. Subscribe to a film review guide that's written from a Christian perspective.

You will save a lot of money by making this small investment. Given the synopsis and content, you can decide if the new releases are suitable for your family's viewing.

Boatwright is a Baptist layman, a veteran film reviewer, and editor of The Movie Reporter film guide, including its www.movie-reporter.com website. He is a regular contributor to Baptist Press, which supplied this article.

IMB trustees adopt \$279.9 million budget

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP) — Trustees of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) adopted a \$279.9 million budget for 2002 during a Nov. 12-14 meeting in Columbia, S.C., that saw the appointment of 118 new career missionaries — the largest group of long-term Southern Baptist workers ever appointed in a single service.

The 2002 basic budget of \$262.9 million represented a \$9.7 million [3.89%] increase over 2001 and focuses 84.8% of its resources on overseas work. The budget depends on Southern Baptists meeting the \$120 million goal for the 2001 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

The 2002 Fiscal Resources Strategy Plan reflects the board's best efforts to allocate resources to the strategies they feel God wants them

to pursue, said IMB Executive Vice President John White.

"Our IMB vision — to lead Southern Baptists to be on mission with God to bring all the peoples of the world to saving faith in Jesus Christ — has been our guide," White said. "This fiscal resources strategy plan sets the direction for where we're going and what we hope God is going to accomplish through the allocation of these resources."

The plan represents "our best effort to fund those items that will help us most effectively fulfill our ministry objectives," he said.



LOST WORLD TO REACH — The Southern Baptist International Mission Board seeks to reach a lost world, like these men praying to Allah in a predominantly Islamic country, through its proposed 2002 budget of almost \$280 million. Islam is now the largest non-Christian religion in America, and it is growing in Europe, Africa, and other parts of the world. (BP photo)

The 2002 budget also incorporates a new Lottie Moon Challenge budget category, a \$17-million item that brings the total 2002 budget to \$279.9 million.

The new category was added because God is creating opportunities beyond the resources missionaries have available, White said. It is intended to challenge Southern Baptists to give in extraordinary ways to help missionaries take advantage of the unprecedented opportunities they are finding all over the world.

"The needs of our lost world

are great," he said. "We need to say to Southern Baptists that, above and beyond this budget, we have needs that are not being funded" by current levels of giving.

As God opens windows of opportunity, needs arise," he said. "We need to say to Southern Baptists, 'Look what God is doing' and show them the opportunities we have to go beyond what we think we can do to what only God can do."

The highlight of the trustee meeting was the appointment of the largest group of Southern Baptist missionaries ever commissioned in a single service. Trustees voted to appoint a total of 124 new workers — including six missionary apprentices — during a Nov. 13 ceremony at First Church in Columbia.

An overflow crowd packed the 3,400-seat sanctuary for the event, which was held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the South Carolina Baptist Convention. The service brought the total number of long-term Southern Baptist missionaries worldwide to 5,128.

IMB has seen an amazing increase in the number of Southern Baptists serving in short-term overseas assignments, but career missionaries remain the foundation of the board's work, said IMB President Jerry Rankin.

"Seventy-five percent of our total missionary force is career missionaries," Rankin said. "We are the only major missions agency that has not experienced a recent decline in long-term missionaries."

The board expects to approve 392 long-term missionaries in 2001, only the fourth time in its 156-year history that more than 300 have been appointed in a single year and 54 more than next largest number, 338 in 1998.

Sam James, the board's vice president for leadership development, told trustees he planned to retire in March.



THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

Record

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

NOVEMBER 22, 2001

VOL. 125

No. 41

Author taps 'jerks' in Bible

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Jerks are everywhere. They cut us off on the interstate, take the parking space that was rightfully ours, talk too loudly during a movie, hurt our feelings, and make fun of us. They're at work and at home and in our classes, our clubs, and our address books — and they're in the Bible, author Margaret Brouillette notes. In her book, "Famous Jerks of the Bible," recently published by Broadman & Holman Publishers, Brouillette introduces a familiar cast of characters, which includes Judas, Samson, Saul (father of Jonathan), and Jonah. The book, penned as an interactive Bible study designed for teens, takes a sharp turn away from the familiar approach to these classic tales to get its message across. "It's a message of wisdom and choices," Brouillette said. "Biblical righteousness doesn't just happen. The Bible tells us to fear God and do good. I think there's a window between 12 and 18 [years of age] where we make many choices, so that's why it was important for me to focus on teens." For Brouillette, the goal of Famous Jerks of the Bible wasn't to retell the stories of these characters, but to present them in such a way that teens could recognize their own character flaws and, in the process, learn how to be people of God. "A lot of the character flaws have to do with choices," Brouillette said. "There are things we can avoid, but I also think that there is a self-control issue... an important issue for teens." In writing the book, Brouillette said she also studied the qualifications and character traits needed to be a good church leader. "I think that the character traits I looked at in Jerks are the opposite [of what is needed]," she observed. "These are people who broke all the rules." In her book, Brouillette allows the rule-breakers to tell their own stories. She begins with a new character and a new character, and then moves on to the story of David's passion for God.

Looking back

10 years ago

Mississippi Baptists, meeting at First Church, Jackson, adopt a \$21 million budget, pass a number of non-controversial resolutions, and elect a layman as president. The 1,708 registered messengers select a 75-year-old physician from Waynesboro, W.W. Walley, as the new president.

20 years ago

For the first time since 1907, a Mississippi Baptist Convention president steps down after only one term in office. Brooks Wester, pastor of First Church, Hattiesburg, announces that he will not let his name be submitted for re-election as president.

50 years ago

Of the 25 churches in the Southern Baptist Convention that led last year in the total number of Sunday School training awards, three are Mississippi churches: First, Pascagoula; Parkway, Jackson; and East McComb, McComb.

Missionaries safe after 'Hollywood rescue'

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (BP) — Two days after their rescue from Afghanistan by American military helicopters, a pair of Baylor University graduates celebrated their freedom at a news conference. They thanked American troops for their "Hollywood rescue" and said they believed they owed their lives to Jesus Christ.

Dayna Curry, 30, and Heather Mercer, 24, both of Waco, Texas, met reporters after being sequestered for 24 hours at the American ambassador's residence here.

After more than three months in a Taliban prison in Kabul on charges of preaching Christianity to Muslims in Afghanistan, they were picked up by

American Special Forces helicopters on November 14 outside Ghazni, a city about 75 miles south of the Afghan capital.

Rescued with them were four Germans and two Australians, who like the Americans were aid workers for Shelter Now International, a German-based Christian charity when they were arrested on August 5.

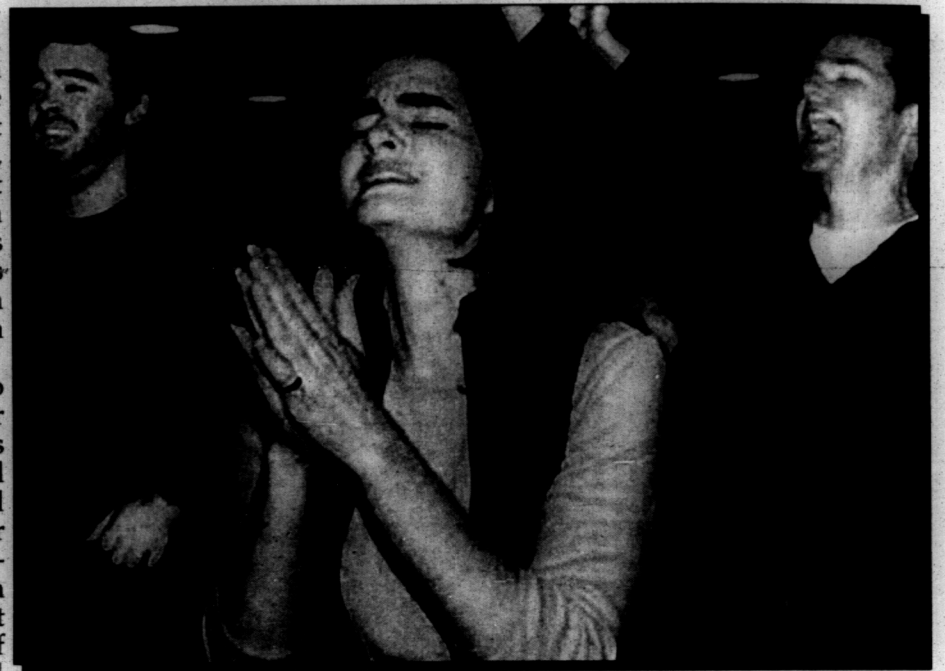
All eight had been held in prison, during the American bombing of Kabul, for the last five weeks on charges that carried the death penalty under Taliban law.

The American women said that although 80% of the charges against them were false, it was true that they had given a book of stories about Jesus Christ and a film on his life to an Afghan family.

They also said that their Taliban captors in the Kabul prison had looked after them generously, giving them "a b u n d a n t amounts of food" and allowing them to pray and sing hymns whenever they wanted.

"From what they had, they looked after us very well," Mercer said. Other prisoners, however, were treated harshly. The two said that they had feared for their lives as the Taliban began fleeing Kabul ahead of the city's capture by Northern Alliance troops.

They said they had been loaded into a pick-up truck and driven three and a half hours southwest of the capital, where they were locked into a shipping container for the night before being taken on to another prison. There, they were freed on Wednesday morning when rebel groups opposed to the Taliban stormed the city, broke into the prison, and shouted "You are



PRAISE OF THANKSGIVING — Baylor Graduate Juliegh Bechom (center) and other Antioch Community Church members celebrate the release of Heather Mercer and Dayna Curry November 14 in a celebration worship service held at the church in Waco, Texas. (BP photo courtesy of The Baylor Lariat/Jackie Paslay)



IMPRISONED FOR CHRIST

— These eight aid workers, including Americans Dayna Curry and Heather Mercer, were imprisoned in Afghanistan on charges by Taliban authorities of sharing their Christian faith with Muslims. (Graphic courtesy of ASSIST News Service at www.assist-ministries.com)

Maryland pastors meet with Miss. counterparts

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Mississippi Baptists pride themselves on partnership missions. They are known for matching needs in areas such as Maryland/Delaware with mission groups from local churches, going into areas in the Northeast to provide training, construction skills, and other services.

It is especially notable, then, when a team from Maryland/Delaware comes to Mississippi to provide training for Mississippi Baptists.

A team of African-American pastors from the Delaware area spent a weekend in Mississippi to provide leadership development training for several African-American Mississippi Baptist churches.

The Partnership Missions and Strategic Missions Departments of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) sponsored the recent event in partnership with the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware. Conferences offered included training in Sunday School, deacon ministry, men's ministry, and stewardship. Solid Rock Church in Greenville, and Gateway Church in Lumberton served as host churches.

According to Jim Price, con-

tract consultant in African-American church planting in the Strategic Missions Department, the conference served two purposes.

"We wanted to get some training to the pastors of our African-American churches, and to pull them together in cooperation with the state, to give them specific direction. I

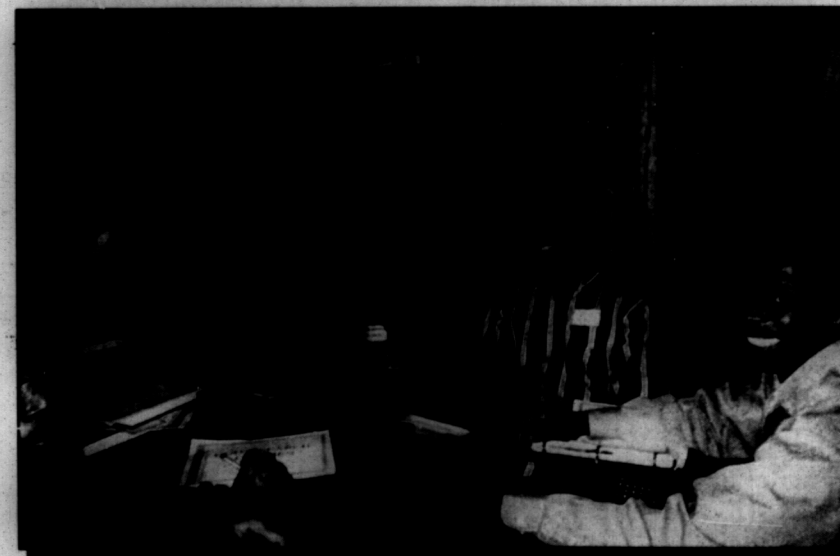
believe we accomplished both objectives. I think it was a stroke of genius among the people in the office here to see the potential in bringing this group down from Maryland/Delaware to do training among their peers."

"This was our first attempt at a partnership mission project from this department," said Ed

Deuschle, director of the Strategic Missions Department, "and it was a great success. The group from Maryland had a lot to offer Mississippi Baptists. Their understanding of Baptist work and doctrine was a definite encouragement to our African-American churches who might not be at the same level yet. The group from Maryland was able to introduce our people to stewardship and the resources available through the Cooperative Program that they hadn't been fully exposed to yet."

Deuschle and Price decided several months earlier to meet in "cluster group" meetings in African-American churches among pastors, simply to determine needs in those churches. According to Deuschle, Buddy Peters, pastor of Gateway Church in Lumberton, visited the Baptist Building and requested specific training for his own congregation. After a contact with the group in Maryland, the Maryland group said they would like to facilitate that training. When 21 people from the Maryland group responded, Deuschle saw the potential for training to be offered in two areas of the state.

"The group that came really offered a ministry of encouragement," Deuschle said.



OPEN TO DISCUSSION — African-American Baptist pastors from Mississippi gathered October 6 with African-American pastors from Maryland to discuss leadership development issues in the areas of Sunday School, deacon ministry, men's ministry, and stewardship. The conferences were held at Solid Rock Church in Greenville, and Gateway Church in Lumberton. Mississippi Baptists are currently in a partnership project with the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware. (BR special photo)

Register: spiritual leadership a necessity

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — "Lord, God! Raise up a new generation of men and women that will be absolutely extraordinary for you!" prayed Dean Register, pastor of Temple Church, Hattiesburg, as he led a New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) culmination of a seminary-wide day of prayer and fasting for spiritual awakening.

"It is a wonderful day in the life of New Orleans Seminary, a time for us to remember how important it is to be touched and stirred by God," NOBTS President Chuck Kelley said in his introductory remarks for the recent chapel service.

"It is always a good thing for a community of believers to set aside a special time of prayer and a special longing for spiritual awakening, and that's why we're here," he said.

Register said as he thought of the Sept. 11 terrorist tragedy, God impressed on him the great need for true spiritual leadership at this time.

"Biblical leadership is dispensed by the Spirit of God, directed by the authority of God and devoted to the glory of God," Register said. "We are called upon by God to be the spiritual leaders and to make a difference in a nation that is very weary right now."

While the need for spiritual leaders in American is great, God's expectations of those leaders is even greater, Register said. Drawing from 1 Peter 5:1-7 which uses the image of a shepherd and his sheep as an illustration, he pointed out what God expects from those he has called to service.

God expects spiritual leaders to care for the heart of the fellowship, just as the shep-

herd cares for his flock, Register said. God wants the church to be a place where people can receive healing, rather than the "hurting place" many churches have become, he pointed out.

"God wants us to lift up, God wants us to hold up, and God wants to encourage," Register said. "God wants to use an institution like New Orleans Baptist Seminary to send out men and women who have been healed by the grace of God to bring healing to others."

Just as the shepherd keeps his flock from danger, God expects spiritual leaders to guard the health of their congregation, Register continued, noting that spiritual leaders are to guard what comes into their flock.

A loss of focus is one of the dangers facing the church today, he said. The focus should always be on Jesus, but too often that is not the case, he observed.

Another subtle danger is the loss of fire, Register said, because churches sometimes fall in love with ritual and methodology instead of the Savior, which in turn robs the church of its joy.

Register related the story of how the atheist philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche rejected Christianity because he never saw the members of his father's church enjoy themselves.

"Have we come to that?" Register asked. Is there "no inexpressible joy on our faces" and "no delight that we are in his presence?"

God also expects spiritual leaders to serve his holiness, Register said. Spiritual leaders belong to God, not the churches they serve, he said, describing serving God's holiness as worship, obedience, and brokenness as exhibited by Moses, Joshua, Caleb, and Deborah.

Register also said spiritual leaders are to build up the house of God by setting an example and living a life of integrity. "The world is not looking for perfection," he said. "They are looking for authenticity."

Finally, God expects leaders to trust humbly in his will, Register said. They are called to obedience rather than comfort and to submit to the leadership of God, he said.

The service concluded with a time of prayer led by members of the NOBTS board of trustees. Participants bowed on their knees as prayers were voiced for the lost, the seminary community, and the nation.

The chapel service also marked the 2001 version of what has become an annual day of prayer and fasting. The special day was initiated in 1999 by Kelley as the seminary trustees faced momentous decisions that would permanently change the face of the seminary.



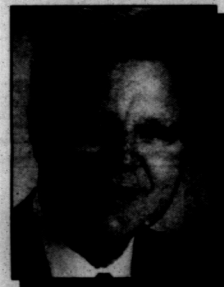
Register

PAY ATTENTION

I have just about had it with pagers, cell phones, and all these modern communication gizmos. I'm not so much against them as I think we just need to get them under control! I was at a funeral recently and in the middle of the service, guess what? Right! Somebody got a phone call. I know people are busy and I know there are really important things that call for people's attention, but if you don't have the time to take to be respectful and be a part of the closing moments of someone's remembrance at a funeral, then you've got a real problem!

Recently, I was at a worship service and I've never heard of or experienced this before, but I guess it is common in some places. Before the service began people were asked if they had a cell phone on to please turn it off during the worship service. I thought to myself, "You've got to be kidding!" But, no, they weren't kidding at all. You know, if you've got so much going on that you can't take a small slice of life and set it aside to hear from God, then you've got even bigger problems!

This phenomenon is everywhere! Weddings! Ballgames! Conferences! Offices! Cars! Churches! Recently, I stopped in a store to pick up some milk and as I was standing in the express lane with about five other folks, I suddenly felt out of place because I realized I was the only one who was not talking on a cell phone! Some folks call it "time management" and other people refer to it as



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

"multi-tasking." I tend to think that, some of the time, it is simply being "overloaded." God made us so that we need periods of work, exercise intensity of body and mind, and also periods of relaxation, refurbishing, and renewal. I'm not talking about laziness, but I am referring to those times when we are not on edge, on call, and geared up for response.

Listen to God's Word to us, "Be still and know that I am God." God invites us to come and have a meaningful, unhurried, uninterrupted, re-energizing time with him. No, I'm not really against cell phones, beepers, and communication hook-ups! They are not really the problem, but only symptomatic of an age that runs and wrestles, works and accomplishes little, and rushes to nowhere, only to arrive and wonder why you came there in the first place.

Any good mechanic will tell you that the secret to a car running well and long is keeping it maintained. On a regular basis, pause long enough to check the fluids, change the oil, maintain the air pressure in the tires — well, you know the drill! In our case, the Creator has called us

to keep in touch with the one who has all of our records, knows all of our needs, and can fill all of our future. So how do you go about having this meeting with the maker?

• **Make a commitment to meet with God.** In most of our lives, that is the way things get done, whether it is going to work or getting a tooth fixed. We make a commitment, an appointment, and work at fulfilling it. I know of very few people whose lives are just an on-going series of accidents. Most of what we do happens because we plan for it and commit to achieving it. We buy and sell, travel, attend ballgames, learn and earn, eat meals, and go to sleep because we plan to.

Whether it is corporate worship at a church on Sunday morning or a quiet time with God as you begin the day, it is not likely to happen unless you commit to making it happen.

• **Actively, purposefully, work at removing distractions.** I do not care who you are, or where you live, or how perfect the environment is when you try to meet with God, something will probably come up to distract you. It is work to push

things back and keep distractions from leading you down a trail of secondary pursuits. In one of the great worship moments in history, Isaiah records his experience with God like this, "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord." Uzziah was a friend of the great prophet and this was a painful time in his life.

I've wondered how many distractions he had to push aside before he got to the "I saw the Lord" moment. It's just speculation, but I wonder if it might could have been written, "In the year that King Uzziah died... 'some friends came by to sit and visit with me,' or 'some wonderful neighbors brought food for me to eat,' or 'I felt so bad, I just didn't go to the temple for I had been through so much and to go to worship was so hard I just decided that I would stay home and worship God in the privacy of my own thoughts.'"

All of us face distractions and we must work at focusing on him and pushing them back.

• **Now, go out and serve the Lord.** Our purpose for meeting with God is not just to meet with God. With him we can be refreshed, encouraged, and given instructions so that our lives will be useful instruments in touching a world for him. When Jesus took his disciples aside, away from the crowds and away from the distractions, he would clarify his teachings to them, intensify his plans for them, and then remind them that he would walk with them into the future.

The same is true for you!

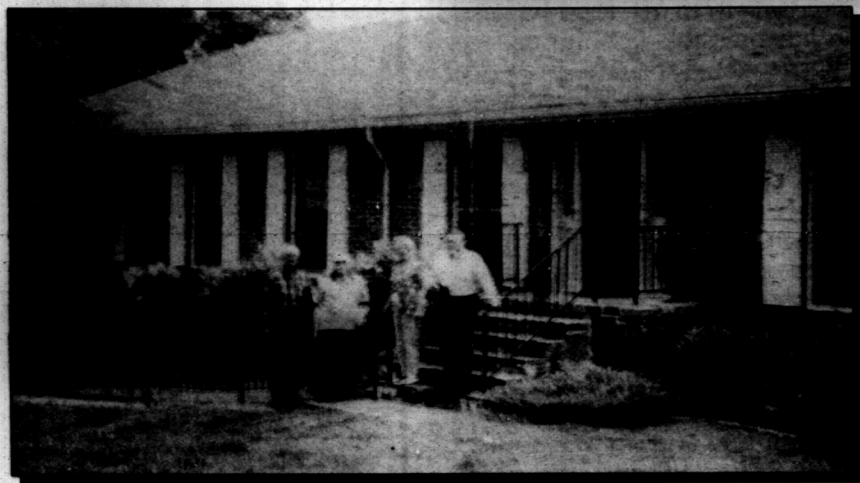
Parkway sets drive-through Nativity

Parkway Church, Clinton, will present The Greatest Gift, an outdoor driving tour of the Christmas story as told in the Bible, on December 5-9 at the church's complex in Clinton. Admission is free. The 30-minute driving route, which leads guests past nine major Christmas scenes, covers approximately ten acres. Nearly 260 volunteers, live animals, and elaborate period clothing will be utilized during the production — believed to be one of the largest Christmas outdoor drive-throughs in the southeastern United States. Performances will begin each evening at 6:30 p.m. and will close at 9 p.m. when the last car is admitted. To get to The Great Gift, take Interstate 20 West to the Clinton-Raymond Road exit (35), then turn south on the frontage road. For more information, contact the church at (601) 924-9912.

Biblical City slated for Dec. 13-15

The fifth annual Biblical City production in Pittsboro will be held December 13-15, featuring a passion play and 80 scenes depicting life at the time of the birth of Christ. There is no admission charge. Hundreds of volunteers will be involved in the production. Live animals and clothing from the era will be used to add authenticity to scenes such as the town market, family gatherings, basket weaving, candle making, and many other settings. For the first time, Biblical City will be held indoors at the Multi Purpose Center on Highway 9 in Pittsboro, enabling the production to remain open regardless of weather. Food will also be available in a nearby building. All groups are encouraged to attend. Production is handicapped-accessible. For more information, contact the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce at (662) 628-6990.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Bobo, Pharr, Nabi, Therrell

Board members of Baptist Homes, Inc. recently visited the Tennessee Baptist Convention to tour their group homes for mentally retarded adults. Baptist Homes, Inc., is a new ministry in Mississippi for the development and operation of services for adults with mental retardation. Pictured (from left) are Charles Bobo, president of the board of directors; Max Pharr, member of the board of directors; Joy Nabi, Tennessee Baptist Convention; and Billy Therrell, vice president of the board of directors.

Weir Church, Weir, held its annual Senior Adults Appreciation Day on Aug. 26. Church members, 70 years of age and older, were recognized for their service to the church. A fellowship meal was held following the worship service. Curtis L. Guess is pastor.

Brewer Church, Richton, has completed renovation of the interior of the church and the work on the outside. Pictured are some of the workers that turned out for workday held on Aug. 18. Ken Ball is pastor.



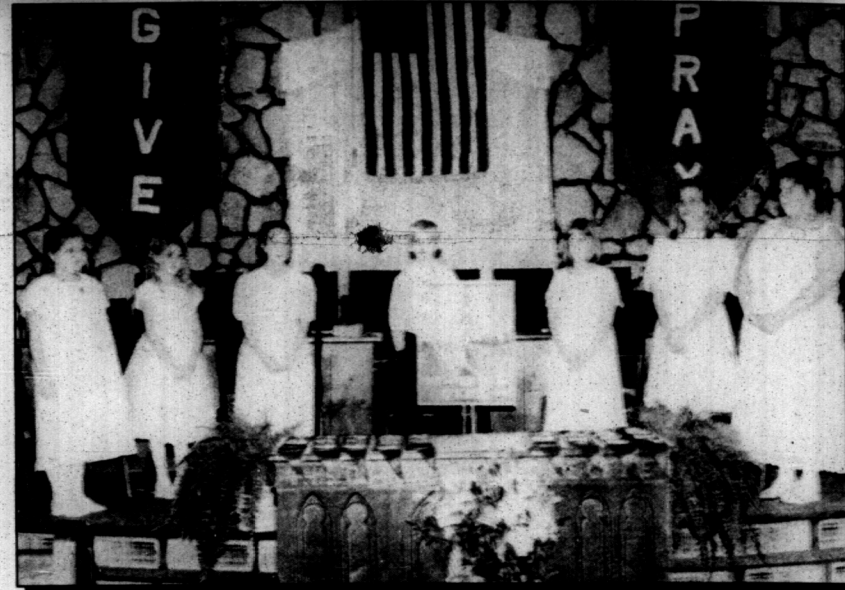
Work day at Brewer Church, Richton

An Oral History, a new book chronicling Mississippi native Duke McCall's up-close and personal eye view of four turbulent Southern Baptist decades, is available from the Baptist History and Heritage Society. McCall, retired president and later chancellor of Southern Seminary, was a key moderate Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leader during the decades of SBC controversy. He is also former executive secretary of the SBC Executive Committee, former president of New Orleans Seminary and former president of the Baptist World Alliance. The book is available for \$20 from the Baptist History and Heritage Society, P. O. Box 728 Brentwood, TN 37024-0728; phone: (800) 966-2278; FAX: (615) 371-7939; website: www.baptisthistory.org

Youth Brotherhood and RAs of Evergreen Church, Louisville, recently used money raised in their fundraisers to purchase In God We Trust posters from the American Family Association. They then assembled these posters in gold frames and donated several of them to the Louisville City Hall and Winston County Courthouse. Pictured (from left) are Daniel Cole; Adam Joiner; Louis Taunton, mayor of Louisville; Hardy Joiner; Phillip Foster; and Joey Reed.



Cole, A. Joiner, Taunton, H. Joiner, Foster, and Reed



GA recognition service at Oak Grove Church, Shubuta

Oak Grove Church, Shubuta, held a GA recognition service on Sept. 30 with a candlelight ceremony. Amber Ivy sang Be Strong by the Martins and dedicated the song in memory of Edna Earl Shaver, the church's Woman's Missionary Union director, who died two weeks prior to the recognition service. Robin Keels, state GA director, presented to the children their World Venture charms. Pictured (from left) are Rachel Allgood, Amanda Ivy, Chelsea Harvey, Michael Ivy, Elizabeth Blair, Noelle Ivy, and Amber Ivy. Vida Ivy is GA leader.

Daniel Memorial Church, Jackson, will present the Jeremiah People on Nov. 25 at 7 p.m. They will also present special music in the 10:30 a.m. worship service on that day. For more information, call the church at (601) 376-4100.

Good Hope Church, Newton County, is sponsoring a Prayer Conference on Dec. 1 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. The conference is Kingdom Praying and will be led by Kevin Meador, president of The Prayer Closet Ministries, Inc. Lunch will be provided and reservations need to be made by Nov. 28. For additional information or to make reservations, call (601) 635-2180 or email at prayercloset_1998@yahoo.com.

Riverside Church, Enterprise, celebrated the completion of its church building on Oct. 7 with a dedication service. Jerry Griffin is pastor.

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CENTREVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking a full-time minister of education and youth. MRE degree required and some experience preferred. Church has new education facilities, family life center, and provides excellent benefits and salary package. Send resumes to Centreville Baptist Church, P.O. Box 326, Centreville, AL 35042.

PEARL RIVER GLASS STUDIO, INC. (800) 771-3639; www.prgs.com. New stained glass church windows, repair and restoration; baptistry murals.

KINGWOOD FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH in Kingwood, Tex., is accepting resumes for the following full-time positions: minister of worship/outreach for contemporary worship services with praise team and to enhance outreach programs; and minister of childhood education for birth - grade 6. Send resumes to Kingwood First Baptist Church, 2303 Tree Lane, Kingwood, TX 77339, ATTN: Mike David or email resume to mdavid@kfbc.tx.org.

HOPPER GLASS STUDIO — custom church windows, reworking, and repair. Columbus/Jackson (877) 477-1899.

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CHURCH PEW UPHOLSTERY Free estimates. Davis Upholstery, Quitman, Miss., phone (601) 776-6617.

SEEKING: DYNAMIC, GROWING, SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH in Northern Kentucky is seeking a full-time Minister of Preschool/Children. Strong organizational and management skills and a desire to be a part of a strong ministry team are required. Please send resume to: Florence Baptist Church, PO Box 456, Florence, KY, 41022-0456, ATTN: Karen Byrd or email to ksbfinsec@zoomtown.com.

FOR SALE: upright piano, good condition \$500. Call (601) 428-5244.

SEEKING FULL-TIME MINISTER of music and worship. Please send resume to Personnel Committee, Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, 8645 Kenwood Road, Cincinnati, OH 45242.

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Roberts, McGriggs, Tyson, Kelly, and Eduardo



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1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.
(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



Gholston and Coward

Mississippi College (MC) announced that BellSouth recently established the BellSouth Endowed Scholarship Fund at MC. This scholarship aids those students who are majoring in business. Pictured (from left) are Lloyd Roberts, interim president; Tameka McGriggs of Edwards, recipient; Lori Tyson of Brandon, recipient; Dave Kelly, BellSouth; and Marcelo Eduardo, dean of the business school. Not pictured is Natasha Nixon, Jackson, recipient.

Tabitha Fox, a freshman at Mississippi College, (MC) has been selected to receive a United Parcel Service (UPS) scholarship. Fox is the daughter of Thomas and Tammy Fox, Baptist missionaries to Croatia. Jon Dray Lee, a junior at MC, also received a UPS scholarship. Lee is the son of Thomas and Gail Lee of Forest.

William Carey College basketball coach Steve Knight was elected to two positions with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and the Gulf Coast Athletic Conference (GCAC). He will serve as NAIA vice president and will become president of the NAIA-MBCA in 2003. Knight will also serve as president of the GCAC. While serving a two-year term, he is the official representative of the conference in all business matters, presides over all GCAC meetings, and has various other duties.

Alumnae of Blue Mountain College (BMC) who reside in the Jackson-Metro area met recently at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board building in Jackson. The featured speaker was the college's new and seventh president, Bettye Rogers Coward. Coward discussed a vision for the College with alumnae. Coward (right) is pictured with the current vice chairman and incoming Chair of the BMC Board of Trustees, Linda Gholston.

William Carey College student Amanda Bryant was recently awarded a Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Scholarship. Bryant, an elementary education major from Petal, received the award based on academic excellence. The scholarship will provide funds for school expenses including fees, books, and housing. Bryant is the daughter of Charles and Renee Evans of Petal.

William Carey College student Katrina Leann Cox, a vocal performance major from Laurel, was awarded a scholarship on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Eastman Memorial Foundation and the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art. The scholarship is awarded to a student who shows academic excellence and community service. Cox is the daughter of Dorothy Jean Cox of Laurel.

The Mississippi Nurses Association (MNA) at their annual convention in Biloxi, named Martha Morris, director of the William Carey College nursing program, Administrative Nurse of the Year. This honor is presented to a MNA member working as a full-time administrative nurse who also participates in community activities directly related to his or her professional growth. Morris has over 35 years of nursing experience in a variety of settings including instructor, nursing manager, educator, and staff nurse.

The fourth annual Lighting of the Quad ceremony will be held on Dec. 4 at 6:45 p.m. on the Mississippi College campus. The entire Quad will be lined with luminaries, and a special Christmas program will be held featuring Christmas music and a reading of the Christmas story.

The Mississippi College (MC) Department of Music will present its sixteenth annual Festival of Lights, Dec. 6-8. Prelude music will begin each evening at 7:15 p.m. in Provine Chapel on campus. This service features the MC Chamber Choir, under the direction of Richard Joiner; the MC Singers, under the direction of James M. Meaders; and the MC band, under the direction of Craig Young. The service of worship, designed in the English Cathedral tradition of Lessons and Carols, offers the public a glorious introduction to the Christmas season. For more information, contact the music office at (601) 925-3440.

Two William Carey College students, Carrie Hayes of Ellisville and Samantha Breland of Wiggins, tied for first place at the National Association of Teachers of Singing regional competition held recently at Harding University in Arkansas. Both students in the Winters School of Music, Hayes and Breland won the Graduate Women's Division. Hayes is a senior double majoring in music education and vocal performance. She is the daughter of Daniel and Kathy Hayes. Breland is a senior majoring in vocal performance. She is the daughter of William and Priscilla Breland.

Regional Auditions for National Association of Teachers of Singing were held Nov. 9 and 10 at Harding University in Arkansas. Mississippi College students were awarded top awards at the competition. Maribeth McCullough of Clinton, won first place in the Junior Women's Division; Rebecca Tinsley of Headland, Ala., won third place in the Senior Women's Division; Anna Walden of Jackson, won fourth place in the Senior Women's Division; Nick Campbell of Germantown, Tenn., won third place in the Junior Men's Division. The Mississippi Music Teachers Association (MMTA) competition was held Nov. 1-3 at Delta State University. Dan Fenn of Smithdale, a senior organ

major, was selected by MMTA as the Collegiate Artist of the Year. Andrew Livingston of Dallas, Texas, won first place in the 2001 MMTA composition competition. Justin Sharp of Caledonia, won second place in the 2001 MMTA Composition competition.

Joseph Maury, a psychology major from Petal, received the scholarship and the designation of United Parcel Services (UPS) Scholar based on his academic record. He currently maintains a president's list academic standing. The scholarships are funded annually by the UPS Educational Endowment Fund, which was established by the United Parcel Service at the Foundation for Independent Higher Education (FIHE) in Washington, D.C.

William Carey College (WCC) will sponsor a conference entitled Advanced Principles of Interpretation of Psycho-Educational Tests, Nov. 30, Jan. 11, and Feb. 1 from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Lake Terrace Convention Center in Hattiesburg. The goal of the workshop is to provide participants with principles of interpretation for the most commonly used tests. The conference is limited to 100 applicants. The fee is \$100 for all three days. Applications and information can be requested by calling Tommy King, professor of psychology at WCC, at (601) 582-6772.

MS POSITIONS AVAILABLE

MT. PISGAH BAPTIST CHURCH, Enid, Miss., is seeking a part-time youth/children director. Position includes Bible study and recreation. Send resume to Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church, 605 Enid Teasdale Road, Enid, MS 38927 or email: csturgis38927@yahoo.com or fax (662) 623-7910.

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER for Rankin County Church; pay \$600-\$800 a month; P.O. Box 5467, Pearl, MS 39208.

CHURCH IN JACKSON suburban area is prayerfully seeking a full-time youth minister. If you feel God may be leading you to this ministry opportunity, please send your resume and letter of interest to: Search Committee, Briar Hill Baptist Church, P.O. Box 129, Florence, MS 39073; or fax (601) 845-0991.

ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH, BRANDON, is seeking a minister of music. The church is located on Highway 43 South between Pelahatchie and Puckett. Please submit resume to: Antioch Baptist Church, 2350 Highway 43 South, Brandon, MS 39042.

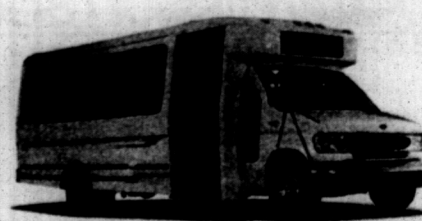
FBC OF MCLAURIN, HATTIESBURG, MISS., is seeking full-time pastor. Formal education is very desirable along with pastoral leadership and qualifications. Please send resume to: 50 Ball Park Rd., Hattiesburg, MS 39401.

CHURCH AVERAGING 100 in Sunday School seeks full-time associate pastor/minister of music and youth. Please send resume to Calvary Baptist Church, 2878 Old Hwy. 27, Vicksburg, MS 39180; or fax to (601) 636-7574.

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NAMES IN THE NEWS



Keith, Wayne, and Shane McGee

Shane McGee was licensed to the ministry on Sept. 23 at Good Hope Church in Leake County. This continues a third generation of ministers in his family. Wayne McGee, his father, is pastor of Good Hope Church. He is the grandson of the late Curtis McGee, who preached for 47 years. Pictured (from left) are Keith McGee, brother; Wayne McGee; and Shane McGee.



White and Veitch

Solomon G. White was licensed to the ministry on Oct. 21. Pictured (from left) are White and Jim Veitch, pastor of Grace

Chapel Church, Brooklyn. White is the youth pastor at Grace Chapel Church.

STAFF CHANGES

New Sight Church, Brookhaven, has called **Steve White** as pastor, effective Oct. 28. A native of Jackson, White has served as pastor of Oyster Bay Church, Gulf Shores, Ala., for eight years.



White

Walnut Grove, as staff evangelist. He is available for revivals or supply and can be contacted at (601) 253-2232.

Four Mile Creek Church, Escatawpa, has called **Hampton Sims** of Moss Point as minister of music and youth, effective Sept. 9. He is a native of Jackson. His previous place of service was First Church, Bayou La Batre, Ala.

Tony Henry has joined the staff at Emmanuel Church,

North Winona Church, Winona, has called **Ed McDaniel** as pastor, effective Nov. 1.



Children of Hillcrest Church, Jackson, composed letters during Sunday School on Oct. 14 that were mailed to the American soldiers.

Still counting: man receives 73 attendance pins

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — While many Southern Baptists think Sunday school is important, few take that attitude as seriously as Julian Mangum.

While many Southern Baptists have achieved pins for perfect attendance for a year, or even several years, there are no records to indicate that anyone has ever earned more consecutive pins than Mangum.

Mangum was honored at Falls Church in Wake Forest, N.C., Sept. 10 for having achieved the almost impossible-to-imagine milestone of having perfect Sunday school attendance for the past 73 years.

That's 73 years — almost three-quarters of a century. How, and maybe a more significant question, why has Mangum done this?

"Well, I just always thought it was important," he answers simply. Mangum was the second generation of Mangums born in the Falls community near Wake Forest. When he was born on Nov. 25, 1919, he and his parents lived on land that Mangum's grandfather had owned.

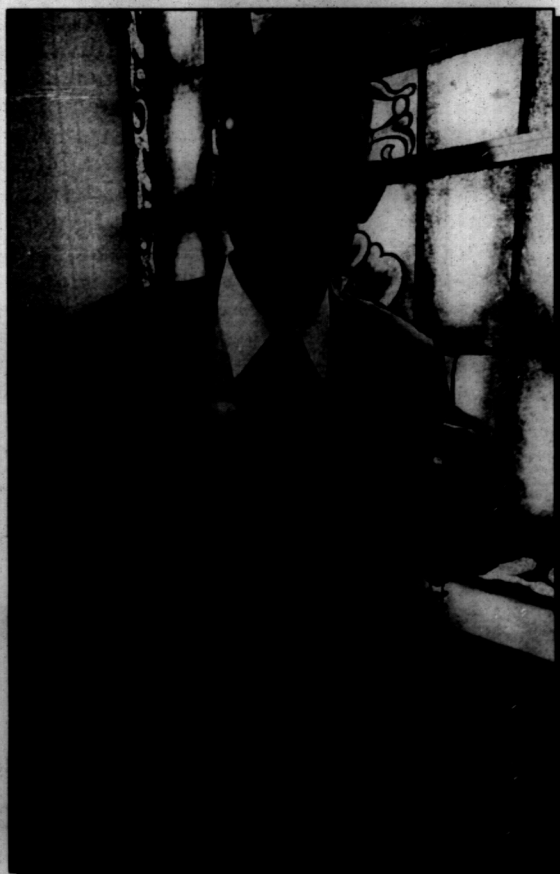
Mangum still lives in the tidy white house that his father built in the 1920s on his family's land. "My grandfather owned a lot of the land around here, but it's been divided up through the years, so there's not a lot left in the family," Mangum said.

Mangum's simple country life took a dramatic turn in the 1941 when he was drafted into World War II. "I got called up," he said, "but even then, I got to go to Sunday school on the Army base when I got my training. Then, we got shipped off to northern Ireland where we were preparing for the invasion of Normandy."

Mangum said bad weather and rough seas made it impossible for his infantry unit to arrive in Normandy until a month after the invasion began. Even through this, Mangum

was able to have Sunday school with the chaplains. "They were fine men," he said.

During the fighting in France, Mangum and 40 of his fellow soldiers were captured



READY FOR ANOTHER PIN — 81-year-old Julian Mangum of Falls Church in Wake Forest, N.C., proudly displays his collection of 73 consecutive perfect attendance pins awarded for his commitment to Sunday School. Mangum plans on going for number 74 and beyond. (Photo by Morris Abernathy)

by the Germans and sent to a prisoner of war camp in eastern Germany. Ten months after being captured, Mangum and the other POWs were liberated by Russian troops as the Russians marched west across Germany.

After reattaching themselves with the Americans, the former POWs were sent back to Fort Bragg in North Carolina. Mangum eventually made his way home to Wake Forest.

"When I got there, I walked in the house and my sister didn't know who I was. She said she didn't even recognize my voice."

Mangum said after getting back home he was satisfied to stay there. He worked in the hardware business and kept his home together. "I was the one who took care of my parents," Mangum, who never married, said. "When my father got so ill, I took care of him, giving him shots and everything."

"Then, before he died, he told me to take care of my mother, and I told him I would. I took care of her until she died. I did the cooking and housework."

All the while, Mangum, who lived "just down the road and over the bridge" from Falls Church, never missed a Sunday.

In the 1960s, Mangum became the greeter for the church. "I noticed there wasn't anybody standing at the back to hand out bulletins to the visitors and to shake their hand, so I just decided I'd do it," he said. More than 40 years later, he's still handing out bulletins, shaking hands, and collecting hugs every Sunday morning.

"It's not hard to remember everyone," Mangum said with a laugh. "Just about everybody here is related to everyone else!"

Notes of congratulations can be sent to Julian Mangum in care of Falls Baptist Church, 9700 Fonville Road, Wake Forest, NC 27587.

Wilbur B. Webb, 75, dies

Wilbur B. Webb, 75, pastor of Schlater Church, Leflore Association, died Oct. 28 at Hospice Ministries in Ridgeland. Funeral services were held on Oct. 31 at Briar Hill Church, Florence, with burial in the church cemetery.



Webb

Webb was called to the ministry in 1951 and was ordained by Briar Hill Church.

A native of Jackson, Webb is a graduate of Mississippi College and Southern Seminary. He pastored Dry Creek Church, Florence, and New Providence, Hazlehurst. He spent 35 years in the ministry in the Mississippi Delta, including Ruleville Church, Ruleville; First Church, Marks; First Church, Itta Bena; Drew Church, Drew; and Moorhead Church, Moorhead. He also pastored churches in Arkansas and Kentucky where he served on the Executive Board.

Survivors include his wife Bonnie Webb of Jackson; sons, W. Douglas Webb of Jackson, Robin T. Webb of New York City, and Larry L. Webb of Atlanta; sister, Frances Shelton of Jackson; brother, Thompson Berry Webb Jr. of Fayetteville, Ark.; and five grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to Schlater Baptist Church, P. O. Box 218, Schlater, MS 38592.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

THANKS FOR CAR

Editor:

Guinevere and I are so grateful to Macedonian Call Foundation for arranging a car for our use while we were in Mississippi in September and October for personal vacation and my surgery. We wish to thank all who are involved in this ministry by donating cars, time, and business talent. We look forward to using another one on stateside assignment in July and August, 2002.

James Young
Jessore, Bangladesh

EXCUSES, EXCUSES

Editor:

Regarding Jim Futral's column entitled, Church Growth Guidelines from the Canton Flea Market, in the October 25 issue, I couldn't agree with him more. My husband and I used to love to go to flea markets even though we never attended the Canton Flea Market. Every Saturday morning we would head out for a flea market somewhere and spend the day. If we couldn't find something we really liked, we would buy something anyway so we wouldn't come home feeling "incomplete." This was all changed when the tornado hit Jones County in February 1987. We

learned that material things do not really matter at all.

I realize you were not condemning flea markets but rather making a point and a very good one I might add. People make all kinds of excuses for not attending church. As you so accurately pointed out, we generally do the things that we want to do.

Several weeks ago I read Futral's article about the "hummingbird church members". He hit the nail on the head that time also. I appreciate him for telling it like it is. Please keep it up.

Erma D. Williams
Laurel

POTTER DISTURBING

Editor:

As an elementary school teacher with the Houston Public School system, I am concerned about our students' interest in the Harry Potter books. I have read only one of the books, The Sorcerer's Stone. I found it disturbing.

Sorcery and witchcraft are represented as desirable activities for lucky children who have supernatural powers. The people who do not have these powers are characterized as stupid and cruel.

Some may think these stories are no different from fairy tales or other fantasy tales. I believe

the Harry Potter stories are different. The villains in fairy tales are witches and sorcerers. The heroes in the Potter books are witches and sorcerers.

The Sorcerer's Stone was well written, fast moving, and action filled. The author is a clever, imaginative writer. I understand why children find the stories so exciting. Since the books are so enticing to young people, I am chilled by the subject matter — witchcraft — which is presented as good.

Witchcraft is not an edifying subject for children no matter how well written the material.

The movie premiered November 16. I hope parents will read one of the Harry Potter books before they allow their children to see this movie.

Lin Bagwell
Eupora

CAUSE OF THE YEAR?

Editor:

I was disappointed after reading the "Resolutions" article (November 8) that reported the five resolutions passed by the 2001 annual Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC) meeting. Only one resolution, No. 3, even remotely mentioned a tie to local Mississippi congregations.

Resolution No. 3 urges all pastors and church officers to be trained on how to recognize

and deal with domestic violence. It also "strongly encourage[s]" pastors to preach about the subject. Why does the MBC focus on this social tragedy this year? What about alcoholism, narcotic abuse, child abuse, eating disorders, dysfunctional families, divorce, debt, depression, hatred, and other societal problems that are prevalent in America? How about encourage pastors to preach and teach the Word of God and let the Holy Spirit work? The Bible does address these things, right? I do not think it is appropriate for the Convention to rally pastors for the "cause of the year" and fill their study time with secular training. Churches are dying and believers are falling away.

Resolution No. 4 reaffirmed opposition to human embryonic and stem cell research and resolved to "call upon the United States Congress" and to "call upon those private research centers" to forbid tax funding and to stop research that requires destruction of human embryos. I would like to know how the MBC will carry out this calling upon of the mentioned entities. Was the recording of the resolution the extent of the calling?

Maybe I am just ignorant of the function and purpose of the MBC.

Justin Hammack
Bay Springs

Gospel message pushed at performing arts fest

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Clowns, mimes, puppeteers, dancers, and actors turned out by the hundreds to learn how to use their talents to communicate the Gospel message at the 2001 National Creative Arts Festival, November 8-10 at Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn.

Sponsored by the LifeWay Church Resources Division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, the conference attracted more than 1,600 people from across the world — including delegations from Iceland and Germany.

"The six people from Germany had just returned from a mission trip to Brazil and they wanted to learn how to use the creative arts on the mission field," said Christy Haines, the festival's coordinator and a LifeWay drama consultant.

Haines said she estimated more than 600 churches from coast to coast were represented at the three-day festival, not to mention the international contingent.

"It really is the largest meeting of its kind in the world," Haines said, "and we were so excited with how this year's conference went."

Held every four years, the festival is designed to teach churches how to integrate the creative arts into ministry and missions.

"We want to enhance what churches are doing, not change what churches are doing," Haines said. "Some churches use creative arts in worship, some in ministry, and some in missions."

"We have some churches that do all three. We want to provide resources and workshops to help churches however they use the creative arts."

The festival theme, based on 2 Cor. 5:17, reminded conferees that "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come." Haines said the festival featured 120 faculty members teaching 450 different workshops.

"Many of the conferees told us they were impressed with the spiritual depth and sensitivity of our conference leaders," Haines said.

"We looked for faculty who had a true commitment to ministry as well as their

professional expertise. We didn't want one without the other," she said.

"I thought it was an outstanding conference, probably the strongest overall faculty we've had at a national conference," said Ev Robertson, director of drama at Carson-Newman College and drama coordinator for the conference.

"I think it was also spiritually uplifting. That's one of the major goals of the festival — a time of spiritual renewal," he said.

Haines said this year's conference emphasized missions. "Almost any church of any size is doing missions," she said, "and that's a perfect place to use the creative arts. We invited our mission agencies to attend so they could let our churches know about opportunities for them to serve on the field."

The International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, Woman's Missionary Union, Centrifuge, and M-Fuge displayed exhibits with information on how local churches could use puppetry, clowning, and other art forms on the mission field.

The Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program booth provided skits and other materials that drama teams can use on mission.

In addition, Super Dude and Andy the Faithful Sidekick, made appearances at the festival to sign autographs and promote their new mission-based skits.



WORSHIP THROUGH MIME — Worship at the National Creative Arts Festival, held November 8-10 at Two Rivers Church in Nashville, involved various disciplines of the creative arts including this performance using mime. (Photo by Morris Abernathy)

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Why?

Acts 17:16-31

By Wayne Marshall

My wife shares the story of a little girl, our niece, who would ask one question over and over as she grew up. You guessed it! The question was simply, "why?"

It was asked about nature, about rules, and even about toys. She is still inquisitive today.

Our lesson today answers the valuable question, "Why share Jesus?" We've looked at whom, how, and where in previous weeks so this week is an obvious conclusion to this series of very important questions about sharing the gospel. Three important answers emerge from Paul's encounter with the Athenians.

Because of the lostness of the world (vv. 16-17). Verse sixteen

cannot be read by any growing believer without a hurt coming in your heart and a lump coming in your throat. Paul said he was stirred by the Spirit.

What a picture of the believer being moved at the picture of a lost world. He saw them as people of idolatry. They wanted to worship something but did not even know what to worship (or who). Paul's response to this situation was first a burden in his spirit. Could I be so bold as to ask, "What was the last thing that broke your heart?" Hopefully all of us have taken life more seriously as a result of this tragedy.

The burden of the Spirit led Paul to broadcast his faith. He was willing even to argue

Marshall

(dispute) with the religious leadership over the important issues (Jesus) of his faith. May I again inquire as to the last time you shared your faith? May I ask if you did so because you saw someone without Jesus Christ as lost?

There is no curve to grade on nor any amount of sincerity upon which to take refuge. Jesus must be shared with the lost and idolatrous of this world. The leading of the Spirit (vv. 18-21). The truth of salvation will always attract others. It is a given fact that some will only be surface listeners while some will be serious. Jesus even told a parable about seed that fell on different types of ground. Only 25% really took root.

One interesting fact about Paul's argument for Christ in these verses is how people came to view his statements. One group thought he was crazy (babbling). Another

group thought he was an intellectual seeking center stage. They gave him an audience in their desolate area (Areopagus).

Yet another final group considered what he said even though they thought both he and his doctrine to be strong. When Jesus is shared, he draws men to himself. Even listening for the wrong reason is still listening. It is amazing how God's Spirit draws all through the message of Jesus.

The lessons we learn (vv. 22-31). Three lessons emerge from Paul's sermon that will help us remember why we share Jesus. The first one is that religious is not righteous. The Athenians missed no god when they worshipped. They took no chances in their religious beliefs, even including the unknown god (v. 23). Yet they knew not Jesus.

A second consideration would be that knowledge is not necessarily a sign of the spiritually noble. Paul even addressed one of their poems as a way of reaching them.

"We are his offspring" (v. 29) is an exact quotation from the Stoic poet Autus. By presenting his argument this way, Paul readily gained attention and could move people beyond a poetic spirit to a broken spirit prepared for Jesus Christ.

One final observation found in verses 28-31 must be made. Images in the hand or head do not replace the image of Jesus placed in our hearts only through salvation.

Paul quickly moves from an image of stone and the ignorance of man's heart to the repentance of man toward God. Not one person on that hill that day could misunderstand Paul's message. They needed Jesus and Paul uses whatever method available to share him with others.

We share Jesus in every way possible with everyone who needs him. Is that not our calling? May we always be light and salt to a world that knows him not as Lord!

Marshall is pastor of Longview Heights Church in Olive Branch.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Work responsibly

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

By Dell Scoper

For the welfare of the church at Thessalonica, Paul felt a deep concern, not only out of his love for this congregation, but also because of the significance of their city's strategic location as a mission center to western Europe.

After Paul had written his first letter to these new converts, he apparently received another report about continuing problems within the Thessalonian church.

So he wrote them again, addressing the ongoing persecution of Christians, their confusion about certain issues and events in relation to God's judgement and Christ's return, and the consequent idleness and disorderly conduct on the part of some of the church members.

Today God expects those of us who are able to work

responsibly, that our lives might reflect the biblical teachings on the value of labor, including our service in God's Kingdom. We have the inspiring examples of Jesus the carpenter and Paul the tentmaker, whose ministries emphasized the dignity of labor.

An appeal to self-support — follow God's examples (vv. 6-10). The erring church members referred to here did not seem to be guilty of intentional sin, but rather were neglecting daily duties and falling into meddlesome habits.

Since no excuse could justify such behavior, Paul therefore advocated taking stern measures to correct it, in hopes that these brothers would adopt a more responsible work ethic after having been denied the privilege of association within the Christian community.



Scoper

Paul taught by word and example that believers were to be responsible members of society. Moreover, he cited the example set by the missionaries while they were in Thessalonica.

His readers could verify his claim that they did not loaf, nor depend on others to supply them free food. Instead, they had supported themselves, working "day and night, laboring and toiling." In spite of personal fatigue and many obstacles, Paul labored far into each night at his tentmaking craft after a long day of preaching, teaching, and ministering.

An admonition to the idle — do your work (vv. 11-13). Paul used three descriptive phrases to make his point about the group mentioned here: they were idle (walking around, out of rank), they were not busy (not working at all), they were busybodies ("busy only with what is not their business"). Based on Paul's apostolic authority, they were to settle down and return to work!

Following this rebuke of the

meddlesome disturbers within the church, Paul turned to address the more mature church members who possibly represented the majority of the congregation. Paul encouraged them to "never tire...do not be weary in doing what is right."

An admonition to discipline the disobedient (vv. 14-15). "Take special note of him" (v. 14) is Paul's ultimatum. Since the troublemakers have not heeded Paul's previous admonitions, he confronted them head-on, saying literally of the idlers, "put a sign on them, tag them, mark them."

No matter how blatant the fault, the purpose of this type discipline was the reclamation of the offender. "Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother." Thus, the recalcitrant idler was not to be cut off from all contacts within the church, but should be allowed to continue in a brotherly status, receiving the discipline imposed on him as a loving chastening.

Benediction and conclusion — rely on God's grace (vv. 16-18). In verse 16, "now" is more accurately translated "but,"

marking a transition from command to prayer. "The Lord of peace himself" alone can make harmony among believers a reality. "Peace at all times and in every way" is Paul's prayer that God's peace will prevail in all the difficult problems facing this church.

In verses 17-18, he undoubtedly took the pen into his own hands, as he frequently did, expecting the Thessalonians to recognize his distinctive handwriting, as a deterrent against any future attempt to forge a letter in his name.

When we realize that the universe is moving toward God's intended end, and that in history's great culmination all of God's good purposes will be fully known, Paul inspires us, as he did the Thessalonians, to live for Jesus now — to trust God, maintain confidence, stand firm, and work responsibly, thus proving our faith.

Scoper is a member of First Church, Laurel.

(Correction: In the lesson for Nov. 18, fourth column, 13 lines from bottom, the phrase "God's prayer" should read "Paul's prayer." The Baptist Record regrets the error.)

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,



no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Southern Baptists continue work in NYC

NEW YORK CITY (BP) — It was the day after the crash of United Airlines Flight 587 in the Rockaway section of Queens in New York City.

As family members of the victims gathered at one end of the Jacob K. Javitz Convention center, a team of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers delivered and quickly spread 200 plush toys around a small child-care center inside.

While the parents gathered for an informational meeting on dealing with identifying remains and other grisly and painful details, the idea was to give the children a small reminder from individuals across the United States and Canada that they do not stand alone.

They call them trauma bears, but the items include purple dinosaurs, bunnies, and other stuffed toy creatures. Five years ago citizens of Oklahoma City were the beneficiaries after the Murrah Federal Building bombing, and those same citizens reciprocated by initiating what has become an international response in New York following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Southern Baptist Disaster Relief's strong reputation with the city in recent days made the organization an ideal candidate to process and distribute more than 15,000 toys that had been gathering in a warehouse.

"The mayor's office has asked us to distribute the bears, and if for no other reason than to honor the mayor's request we need to do it," said John LaNoue, a 30-year Disaster Relief veteran from Texas who was called in with his wife, Kaywin, to coordinate the effort.

"We also have found it to be a tremendous personal blessing and opportunity for ministry," he said.

Southern Baptists have been one of the primary providers of hot meals for emergency and relief workers since the attacks, and more recently have developed a large-scale operation cleaning up apartments adjacent to the former World Trade Center complex.

A number of Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief workers are currently in the New York City area, giving up their Thanksgiving holiday to assist the victims of the twin disasters.

The bears have become a symbol in many ways of the nation's empathy for all those affected by the attack. Some are sent through the mail, while others left at local memorials for victims.

Many carry notes of encouragement from the donors as reminders that they are loved — by the giver and by God.

Many of the bears do go to children who were in some way victimized by the attacks, while others go to children in homeless shelters, hospitals, child-abuse and neglect situations, and other venues where the joy they impart is most needed.

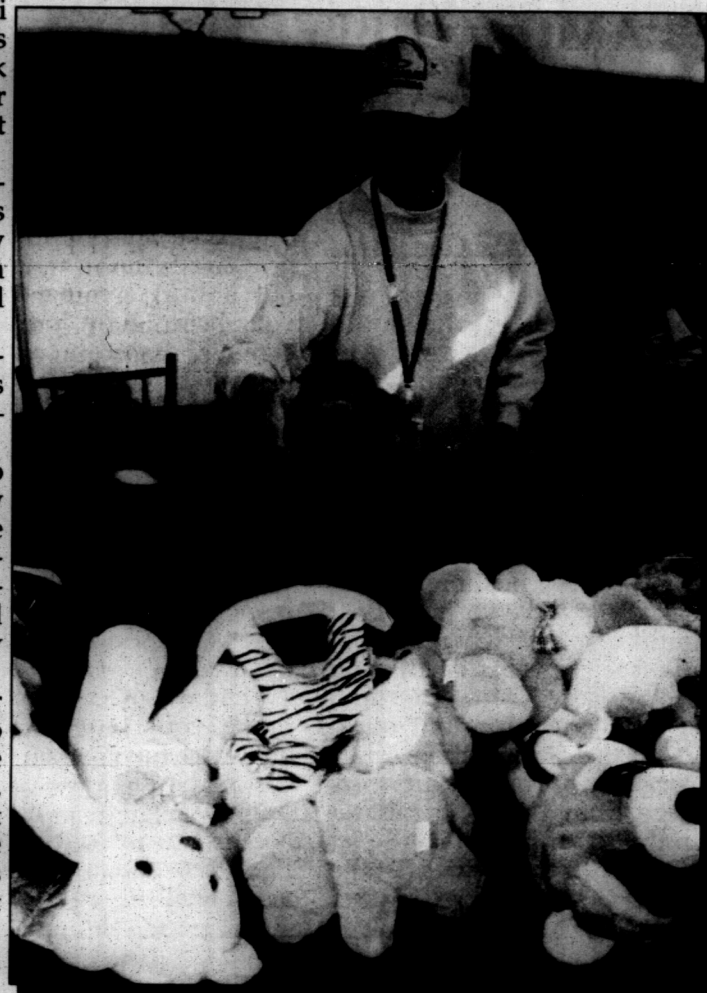
They also go to adults, either for giving to needy children or to keep for themselves. One police officer told Kaywin LaNoue, "You will never know what these bears and T-shirts have meant to the morale of this department, just to know that somebody cares."

On another occasion she told a particularly wearied firefighter, "You look like you need a bear."

"I do. I really do," he replied.

Kristine Berger, a liaison to the Emergency Operations Center from the non-profit group New York Cares, is responsible for helping find places for Southern Baptists to deliver them.

"It's just a pure connection saying, 'Here's a little gift that will bring a smile to your face,'" said Berger. "Even if the bears came to New York with one set of inten-



FROM BAPTISTS, WITH LOVE — Sarah Beck, a member of Grants Creek Church in Fosters, Ala., helps sort bears for distribution to disadvantaged children and emergency workers in New York City in the latest effort by Southern Baptists to reach out to the victims of the tragedies in New York City. (Photo by James Dotson)

tions, they are going to children who can really use them.

"That is wonderful," LaNoue said of the bears they had just set up, "because those children are going to have it hard enough."

Bibliocipher

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ISLZZLK HYL FL, DOLU
TLU ZOHSS OHAL FVB,
HUK DOLU AOLF ZOHSS
ZLWHYHAL FVB MYVT
AOLPY JVTWHUF, HUK
ZOHSS YLWYVHJO FVB,
HUK JHZA VBA FVBY
UHTL HZ LCPS, MVY AOL
ZVU VM THU'Z ZHRL.

SBRL ZPE: ADLUAUF-ADV

Clue: J = C

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Nine: Thirty-Seven.

Jetliner crash stirs attendance at Queens church

NEW YORK CITY (BP and local reports) — Each Sunday, people from 15 nations or more worship together at United Trinity Church in Queens, New York.

Since Sept. 11, they've been clinging together even more closely than usual. Pastor Avery Sayer's phone rang con-

tinually the morning of Nov. 12 after American Airlines Flight 587 outbound from Kennedy crashed into a residential area of southeastern Queens.

With the church located less than eight miles from both LaGuardia and Kennedy airports, Sayer said United Trinity

concentrates on the needs at hand, rather than the "what-ifs" of nonstop news coverage about airplane disasters.

Attendance at Sunday morning worship spiked the first two weeks after Sept. 11. Since then, it is the midweek prayer times that have doubled and tripled in attendance.

"Church is basically monologue," Sayer said. "The prayer service is dialogue. People are making the connection between the sermons and

the questions they have — even when that connection was unintentional — because they're looking for answers."

The congregation's diversity and its strength in adversity are gifts from God that show his power, members say.

"In this church you find people from all over the world," said Patricia McFarlane with her Jamaican accent. "It's like a fulfillment of the song I sang as a child in my country: 'The Spirit Is Moving All Over the World.'"

"We can see from this church that everywhere on God's earth, God is touching people's lives."

United Trinity, one of the most ethnically diverse congregations in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), was started in 1967 by the SBC Home Mission Board (HMB), precursor to today's North American Mission Board, as one of the first churches launched to minister specifically to people who live in an apartment complex.

HMB missionary Don Rhymes started United Trinity as a "ministry center" in one of the apartments in the 5,000-unit LeFrak City complex. A year after its formation, the ministry center became a church after Rhymes was given a commen-

dation by the police for his work with youth.

Several years after starting the church, Rhymes accepted a position on ministerial staff of First Church, Jackson. He later died in an automobile accident in downtown Jackson.

United Trinity members in the late 1990s began prayerwalking through the complex. Within weeks Mayor Rudy Guilani began a citywide crack-down on crime that included Queens in general and LeFrak City in particular.

Members continued to do nothing more than prayerwalk through the complex as they were led by the Holy Spirit.

In one particularly dark section, United Trinity members prayed for God's light to shine. In less than a week, city crews replaced shot-out light fixtures in the prayed-for area.

"I've seen the difference since we started prayerwalking," member Hyacinth Bowen said. "I know the [drug] problems are still there, but it's less visible now."

In the wake of the twin tragedies in New York City, United Trinity is more visible than ever to the 25,000 or more residents of LeFrak City.



BAPTISTS IN QUEENS — United Trinity Church in Queens is located in two connected ground-floor apartments in one of 20 high-rise buildings in LeFrak City, a 5,000-unit complex in the New York borough hit hard by the American Airlines crash in the Rockaway neighborhood. (Photo by Karen Willoughby)